

AN ADDRESS
ON
THE SUBJECT OF LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS
TO
PROMOTE EDUCATION;
DELIVERED BEFORE
THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
OF
HAMPDEN SIDNEY COLLEGE,
AT
THEIR LAST COMMENCEMENT,
BY JAMES M. GARNETT.

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An Address on the subject of Literary Associations to Promote Education.

Delivered before the Institute of Education of Hampden Sidney College, at their last commencement, by JAMES M. GARNETT.

Gentlemen Members

of the Institute of Education :

IN compliance with the invitation with which your committee honored me some months ago, and for which I desire here publicly to make my acknowledgments; I now present myself to address you on the subject of "literary associations for the promotion of education."

Thus called upon for a purpose so philanthropic, a cause so truly glorious, and one moreover of such vital importance to our whole community, I could not hesitate to comply, however apprehensive I might feel of not being able to do full justice to the subject. I came to this determination the more readily, from the confident belief that the invitation would never have been given, had not the gentlemen members of your committee as well as those for whom they acted, been prepared to extend towards my deficiencies every indulgence which they might require. This brief explanation of the circumstances which brought me here, and of my own feelings on this highly interesting occasion, seems due not only to myself, but to the very respectable assembly in whose presence I now appear. Let me endeavor now to fulfil the duty, which I have undertaken to perform.

Literary associations for the promotion of education, unquestionably transcend in importance all other voluntary combinations of human beings that either *do* or *can be imagined* to exist for other purposes than mental culture, as far as the intellectual and moral powers of man surpass his mere animal appetites and passions: for it is by education alone—education I mean *as it should be*, that the former can be fully developed and perfected;—by education alone *as it should be*, that the latter can be so restrained and regulated as to minister to our comfort and happiness, instead of overwhelming us with irreparable misery and ruin. Obvious as this most momentous truth surely is, and deeply as we should imagine it would be felt by every rational being, it is but too certain that the number of those who do feel it in any such way, is most lamentably small in proportion to our whole population. This would be altogether incredible, were we to judge only from listening to our constant vauntings of the rapid progress of society in all the arts and sciences; of the multiplication and vast extent of modern discoveries; and the actual improvements in every branch of worldly knowledge. But when we use our *eyes*, as well as our *ears*; when we look immediately around us and view attentively our condition in Virginia, the

striking want of public spirit in regard to the general instruction of the people, and the melancholy scarcity of "literary associations for the promotion of education;" it inflicts a pang of deep disappointment—of bitter mortification on the heart of every true, intelligent lover of his country. Travel through our sister states to the north and east, (as many of us would be much the better for doing,—to remove our senseless prejudices,) and we behold such associations, almost every where. No large city is without many of them; while they are found diffusing their incalculable blessings through nearly every little town and village, under some one or other of the various forms and titles which they there assume: such for example, as lyceums, conventions of teachers and other friends of the cause, institutes of instruction, and education societies. Their precious fruits manifest themselves in their numerous schools;—in their neighborhood libraries; in their public book stores; but above all in their multiplied places of public worship. These all combined in one view, present to the mind's eye of the contemplative patriot and philanthropist, a picture of social improvement and happiness, which it is impossible to mistake, or to consider without the most heartfelt emotions. The plain simple realities which we may there see, unaided by any of the fashionable magniloquence about "the march of intellect;" unvarnished by any false coloring or exaggeration whatever; force upon our minds a most thorough conviction, that the people of these happy states, owe the whole, either directly or indirectly, to their constant and zealous encouragement of associations for the promotion of education. These have been so ramified and extended among them, as now to embrace nearly every member of their several communities. Why, my friends, why let me most earnestly demand of you, should not we Virginians, "go and do likewise?" Why should not we profit by their meritorious example; and love them for it as we ought to do with a truly fraternal regard, instead of entertaining against them (as far too many of us do,) dislikes and animosities which are much more disgraceful to ourselves than injurious to them? And here permit me to remark, *en passant*, that were such regard cultivated and cherished, as it should be among all the states of this great confederacy, we should not only improve each other rapidly in every useful art and science; but the bonds of our fraternity, would be so increased and strengthened, that the whole world could not exhibit a government wherein all the numerous blessings of civilized life would be so widely diffused, so highly valued, so richly enjoyed.

But to return to our neglect of associations for the improvement of education. Shall we plead utter ignorance of their numerous advantages, their extensively beneficial effects, or shall we acknowl-

edge what I fear is the shameful truth, and what a very large majority of us may utter—each man for himself—the Heathen's confession: "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*?" Shall we not hope however, that the glorious period of moral reform is not far distant; that the time is fast approaching when this wretched, debasing—nay, wicked habit of following the worse, where we both see and approve the better course,—is about to be eradicated in a great measure; by a vigorous enlightened prosecution of all the means necessary to effect a thorough change among us? To you, gentlemen members of the Hampden Sidney Institute, I believe Virginia is indebted for the first example of a voluntary association on a large scale, to promote education—an example which I most earnestly hope will be zealously followed in every part of our widely extended territory,—until the great, the vital object, which you so laudably aim to accomplish, shall be fully realized to the utmost extent of your wishes. It will be a time of heartfelt rejoicing, a day of glorious jubilee, to all who may live to see it—a day which even *we* of the present generation may highly enjoy by anticipation, although we have little prospect of living to participate in all its precious blessings. By the way, how do *we* obtain this power of anticipation, this faculty of feeling inexpressible delight in all the advantages, gratifications and enjoyments of those who are to live after we are dead and gone? Are we not indebted for it to *education*—to that moral and religious part of it which teaches us that we have immortal souls which connect us inseparably with future generations—which command us to provide as far as we can for *their* happiness—which convince us that this very occupation, more than any other, will minister to our own felicity; and which in fact constitutes one of our most sacred duties upon earth? Oh! that we could all feel this momentous truth in the inmost recesses of our hearts! Utterly superfluous then would be not only the effort of the humble individual who now addresses you, but every other of a similar nature; for there would not then be a single member of society, possessed of the common capacities and feelings of humanity, who would not anxiously unite with heart, hand, and all available means, in promoting universal education, as the only practicable mode of insuring universal happiness. *This*, so far as it is attainable in our present state of existence, necessarily depends upon every human Being, of sound mind, understanding thoroughly all the various duties which he has to fulfil, as well as comprehending and feeling the utmost extent of his obligations to fulfil them—and *this* again depends both upon *what* and *how* he has been taught; in other words, upon *education as it should be*.

To do justice as far as I possibly can to the cause which I am now pledged to support, I feel

myself here bound to assert that in almost all our attempts to educate the youth of our country a most pernicious error is committed, either in regard to the meaning of the term *education itself*, or else in the methods pursued to accomplish our object. Should I succeed in establishing this charge, it will certainly result in the irresistible demonstration of that which I have been invited to illustrate—the great utility of voluntary associations, in some form or other, for the promotion of education. Admit the purpose to be essentially desirable, the obstacles to its attainment such as I believe they can be proved to be, and the necessity for such associations in the absence of all effective legislation, follows as an undeniable consequence. They naturally possess, in common with all other combinations of human effort to attain a particular end, far greater power of accomplishing *that end*, than the insulated and separate exertions of all the individuals concerned,—even supposing that every one would exert himself to the utmost, in his own particular way. This truth has resolved itself into the well known adage—"united we stand, divided we fall;" and I know of no more forcible exemplification of it, than in the present state of education among us Virginians. Individually consulted, we cry out nearly to a man, "let us educate our people!" but if called on for combined action, very few or none respond to the invitation. We have no common system—the result of general concert; no uniform plan, either as to the objects, or modes, or courses of instruction; no generally established class-books in the various studies pursued in our schools and colleges; no particular qualifications made indispensable for teachers; but each is left to the vain imaginings and devices of his own heart, or to be governed by the chance-medley, hap-hazard contrivances of individuals, very many of whom have neither the capacity, knowledge, experience, nor inclination to devise the best practicable methods for accomplishing the grand purpose of education. Politics, law, physic, absorb nearly all the talents of the State; while the vital business of instructing the rising generation; a business which requires minds of the very highest order and moral excellence to execute it properly, is generally left to be pursued by any who list—pursued far too often most reluctantly, as a mere stepping-stone to some other profession, and to be abandoned as soon as possible for almost any thing else that may turn up. The inevitable consequence is "confusion worse confounded;" driving parents and guardians to frequent changes both of schools and teachers for their children, where changes of books and modes of instruction follow, almost as matters of course; for those who are to handle the new brooms rarely believe they will be thought cleaner sweepers than their predecessors, unless they display their superiority by pursuing

some entirely different method. This petty ambition would be too ridiculous to deserve serious notice, were it not for the vast amount of evil which it produces, by not only retarding the progress of all youths under a course of instruction, but by constantly and powerfully tending to bring the whole class of teachers into general contempt. Under these circumstances, the existence of which none can deny, where shall we seek an adequate remedy for evils of such magnitude; where turn our eyes but to well organized voluntary associations for the promotion of education? These would collect and combine the powers, the talents, the knowledge of a very large portion of all the individuals in our society best qualified to accomplish the object. They would create a general taste, an anxious desire for intellectual pursuits; they would elevate the profession of the teacher to that rank which its vast importance to human happiness renders essential to its success; and would assuredly extend their influence to the remotest limits of our community, far more rapidly than could any scheme of legislative creation. It has been so in every other State, so far as the experiment has been tried. Why then should we doubt their success among ourselves? We who believe ourselves possessed of the wisest, the freest, the happiest government on earth, are incalculably more interested than any other nation (if our belief is true), in the cause of universal education; for on *its* success, the very existence of free government itself, nay of individual and national happiness so far as government can affect either, must ultimately depend.

To this conclusion my own mind has been irresistibly brought by the whole course of my observations and experience for the last forty years of my life. But as some of my auditors may possibly differ from me, I will respectfully ask leave now to state more particularly my views of the great objects of education and the errors into which we have fallen in pursuit of them—errors which I verily believe will never be corrected but by voluntary and numerous associations, similar at least in design, to the one here established.

These objects are, *the perfecting of all our faculties, both of mind and body*; but chiefly, the full developement of man's *moral nature*, as the means of leading him thoroughly to understand, as well as voluntarily, constantly, and anxiously to aim at accomplishing all the glorious ends of his creation. Nothing deserves the name of education which does not tend directly and intelligibly to these great objects. Judge then, I pray you my friends, how little what is usually called education is entitled to be so styled! But first hear that you may judge. Is it not the sole aim in all our schools of the lower kinds to enable pupils to enter those of a higher grade, not by the evidences they can produce of advancement in the knowledge and practice of moral and religious principles, but

by their proficiency in the elements of certain languages and abstract sciences? And what are the great, the ultimate purposes to be achieved after reaching these higher schools—the colleges and universities of the land? Are there any other, generally speaking, than merely to obtain a college degree—a diploma for a more extended proficiency in the same or other languages and abstract sciences? Is moral and religious acquirement ever made a pre-requisite? Is moral and religious conduct always rendered indispensable? Yet man without these is either a drone or a nuisance in society. Surely then, I may assert without fear of contradiction, that education conducted on any of the plans most prevalent among us, is really *not what it should be*,—for it continually places objects of scholastic pursuit in the highest rank, which have no just claim to any such elevation; but should ever be held subordinate to the far more exalted and all essential acquisition of sound, moral and religious principles. No more of these however, than will superinduce general conformity to college rules, and decency of general conduct, are ever required of candidates for collegiate honors; and all these may be and frequently are obtained without other proof either of moral or religious attainment, than what has just been stated.

This cannot be right. Man, in fact, *must be* considered and treated from infancy to the last moment of his life as a being formed by his Maker for a state of existence far, very far different from the present—a state for which his sole business on earth is,—constantly to be preparing, by a diligent culture of *all* his powers—by the beneficent use of *all* his means; and by the faithful performance of *all* his duties to himself, to his fellow creatures, and to his God. *This and this only is education.* The learning of languages, arts, and sciences, which too often comprise the whole of education, furnishes him only with the stepping-stones, the scaffolding, and the tools to aid him in the erection of the grand edifice, which although based on earth, should rear its Dome to the highest Heaven, and be built for eternity as well as for time. But alas! these sciences, arts and languages, are almost always mistaken for the edifice itself—an edifice whose external decorations are much more valued and regarded than the great purposes for which it should be constructed: in other words, it is prepared more for show than use—more to attract the admiration of others, than really to benefit for all time the vain possessor who is to live in it, and to derive lasting security, comfort and true enjoyment from the skilful adaptation of all its various parts to the complete attainment of these inestimable blessings. To the mistake here figuratively expressed, more than to any other cause, we owe the countless failures, the innumerable, unsuccessful, heart-sickening efforts to educate the

rising generation: for scholarship, by which I mean a thorough acquaintance with all that is usually taught in our schools of the highest grade, is really and truly *not thorough education*, but a very inconsiderable and quite inferior part of the grand total. That which crowns the whole—that to which all else should be merely subsidiary—that which alone can elevate man from earth to Heaven,—is *moral and christian education*, producing constantly, by divine grace, *moral and christian practice*. It is *this* and *this only*, which can enable us to meet as we should, all the changes and chances of this mortal life—to carry along with us into whatever calling or profession we may choose, all the requisite knowledge, ability and will, to render it most conducive not only to our own subsistence, comfort and happiness, so far as these are dependant thereon, but to the general good of the whole community in which we live. In other words, it is moral and christian education alone, that will give us both the power and effectual desire to fulfil every duty of the present life in such a manner as will best promote our own interests, temporal and eternal, as well as the great interests of society at large, in every way towards which we can possibly contribute. This efficient devotion of our powers and our means to the good of others, proceeding from a union of moral and religious principle, should ever constitute man's highest honor here below, since it is certainly the most important of all his earthly duties.

Literary institutions may bring to the utmost possible degree of perfection the methods of acquiring all languages, arts and sciences—they may invent matchless ways of making accomplished scholars, in the ordinary acception of the term—they may indoctrinate the youth of our country in every thing usually called scholastic learning—all this they may do with a rapidity and certainty heretofore inconceivable, yet they will fall immeasurably short of attaining the grand, the paramount objects of all which deserves to be called education, unless the fixing indelibly of moral and religious principles in the minds of all who are to be educated, be made the basis, the essence, and vital end of all instruction whatever. The idea is utterly preposterous that human beings ever can be taught to form adequate conceptions of the great purposes for which they were created—of the indispensable necessity of fulfilling most faithfully all their duties, in order to accomplish these purposes; and of the ineffable happiness both here and hereafter, that will be secured to all who do thus fulfil them, merely by teaching them all the languages, arts and sciences in the world,—if *that* be omitted, without which all else is but mere dust in the balance,—I mean self-knowledge, self-control, self-devotion to duty as the supreme objects of our temporal existence. Do not, I beseech you, my friends, here misunderstand me. Far indeed,

very far am I from underrating the real advantages, the true value of what is generally understood by the term scholastic attainments. No one can estimate more highly than I do, their power of extending our views, liberalizing our sentiments, enlightening our minds, strengthening our intellectual faculties, and exciting an ardent desire to increase our knowledge. Considered as the *means* and not the *ends* of education, I would always award to them the highest rank. But when we have said *this*, nothing more can justly be affirmed in their favor—if disconnected, as they too often are, from the ultimate and vital purposes of all perfect education. These undeniably are, (and it cannot be too frequently repeated,) to expand, to warm, to christianize the heart—to call into vigorous, untiring action, all our best affections, our noblest attributes, and to fit us thoroughly both for our present and future state of existence. Unless that which is called education will do *this*, we may safely assert that it is grossly *miscalculated*, and that if it is never made to comprehend any thing more than what is generally understood by the term scholastic attainments, a mistake more fatal to the happiness of our species can scarcely be committed. Of this I would ask no better proof than would be afforded by an impartial examination of the actual acquirements, the conduct and the characters of those who are honored with the high sounding title of accomplished scholars. If they are really *better educated*, ought they not certainly to be not only wiser but *better men*, that is if education actually was what it most assuredly should be? But what is the fact? Do we find them better men, better citizens, better neighbors, friends and heads of families or states, than those who, with less scholarship, have had much more attention paid to their moral and religious education, than to those scholastic acquirements of which nothing but the most thorough, moral and religious instruction can teach us either the true value or the proper use? Gladly, most gladly do I admit that very many amiable men will be found among the former; for I am happy to say that I know many such—but it is equally true, that those praiseworthy traits of character and conduct which we frequently see apart from religious belief in christianity, form exceptions to the general rule that *unbelief* in christianity tends certainly to produce both vice and depravity. Whereas immoral character and practice among professors of religion, form exceptions to the general rule that christian faith tends surely to produce christian conduct. The first class of persons are good in spite of their worldly creed—the latter are bad in direct opposition to what they believe to be right.

We shall never arrive at a clear, satisfactory conclusion in regard to this all important subject, education, but by first solving the questions, *what*

are the paramount duties of the present life—*what* the only means of securing their fulfilment? Are these duties *solely* or even *chiefly*, to speak, or to understand a great variety of tongues—to measure the earth, the waters of the mighty ocean, nay the heavens themselves, with instruments and means of human invention—to wear away life itself in the vain attempt to discover the elementary principles of all visible things—to scan thoroughly the vast powers and possible expanse of human intellect—and to astonish the world by the perfection to which all human science, arts and accomplishments may be brought? Or, *are they* that we should think wisely, act justly, and practice truth, industry, self-denial, and universal benevolence,—from the sincere, heartfelt, ever active love of our fellow creatures,—and willing obedience to all the commands of our God? Are the means to secure the fulfilment of all these most momentous duties, such as are usually adopted in our schools?—or, shall we not find them in very numerous instances nearly destitute of any but means rather of counteraction than promotion? By what other term can we characterize the usual school appliances, to the chief of which I beg leave to invite your special attention? These are, the fear of human punishments and disgrace, instead of the fear of offending our Maker—the stimuli of emulation and ambition: the first, to surpass supposed rivals and competitors for fame and fortune; the latter, to attain the worldly distinctions of high rank and emolument in what are called the “learned professions,” or the celebrity of political power, and elevation above our fellow men. But will any sober, reflecting person say, that such appliances do not tend constantly, nay almost certainly, to make us fear man more than God—to inspire more dread of public sentiment than love of public and private duty—to poison our hearts with jealousy and envy, and to intoxicate us with pride, vanity and ambition, rather than to fix indelibly in our souls all those truly christian virtues, which man must not only possess but exercise—not only acquire but ardently cherish, to attain the great end of his being?

The answers to the foregoing questions involve matters of the deepest possible interest not only to the present, but to all future generations; for it depends entirely upon them, and the effects they may have on those who regulate and direct our schools of all kinds, whether the whole business of scholastic education shall be conducted in reference merely to the things of time, or to the immeasurably higher concerns of eternity. In judging of this matter, let us not trust entirely to the customary forms of expression, in which all our schools, from the highest to the lowest, publicly invite patronage. These are rarely deficient in promises that the moral and religious principles and conduct of the pupils shall be strictly attended to;

which proves at least the general belief in the class of instructors, that the parents and friends of children attach great importance to these matters. But no one who has the least knowledge of the manner in which our schools are usually conducted, can be ignorant that such promises are much more a matter of form than substance, however sincere the individuals may have been in making them. “*Profession*,” we all know “*is not principle*,” neither is it very generally followed by conformable practice. In nothing is this melancholy fact more conspicuous, than in the neglect, throughout our schools of every kind, of all such moral and religious instruction as would thoroughly convince the pupils that *this* is deemed of infinitely higher value than every thing else which either *is* or *can be* taught at such places. But instead of such instruction, if we examine with a view solely to ascertain the truth, we shall find almost every where that the real, the constant, the supreme object, is to make what are called good scholars and learned men—men to make a figure in the world, and to be celebrated in the various walks of well disguised pride, vanity and ambition. To accomplish this object all efforts are strenuously directed, all appliances industriously used; while moral and religious principles, if inculcated at all, will be found to occupy rather a nominal than a real and efficient rank. If any doubt it, let them inquire as impartially as they can, what manner of men those are in general who constitute the educated class? Are they in most instances moral and religious persons, or *are they not*? Do they seem better qualified or more disposed to fulfil the various duties of life, than those who have not been blessed with equal opportunities for intellectual improvement? If they do not, we may be absolutely certain that some radical errors have been committed in their education,—since the great object of all that deserves the name, assuredly is to make men, not merely more learned, but wiser and better—more intelligent and more virtuous, than they could possibly be without it. That they *would be so* under a proper system of instruction—a system wherein mere scholastic learning, in the common acceptation of the term, should never be considered synonymous with education, none can possibly doubt who have ever paid the least serious attention to the subject, or who have any faith in the scripture declaration that, *if we train up a child in the way he should go, he will never depart from it when he is old*. Whenever, therefore, we witness any departure among such of our young people as are said to be well educated, it amounts to a demonstration that *they have not been thus trained*. If they had been, such departures would be very rare, instead of being most fatally common; nor should we find, even after making all due allowances for the frailty and depravity of our nature, these educated youths, in so many deplorable instances, despisers of religion,

loose in their morals, voluptuaries in practice as well as principle, ignorant or regardless both of their public and private duties, and devoted entirely to their own selfish, depraved gratifications. But the lamentable truth is, that in a vast majority of our schools, whatever promises may have been honestly promulgated to the contrary, the moral and religious principles of the pupils are *not made* paramount objects of attention. On the contrary, it seems to be almost always presumed, that the great work of forming these principles has been accomplished under the parental roof, where alas! (to our shame be it spoken,) it is in thousands of instances utterly neglected! Each pupil is consequently left to form them for himself, after his last course of collegiate instruction, during which these all essential guides to present and future happiness are rarely put into requisition, farther than may be deemed necessary to the peace and good order of the establishment, or as a part of the mere commendious formulary of instruction. The fatal and almost certain consequence is, that multitudes of college graduates, after being emancipated from scholastic restraints, either plunge at once into the destructive vortex of folly and vice, or devote themselves so entirely to the pursuits of wealth, pride, vanity and ambition, as effectually to exclude from their minds all thoughts of another life. These minds, thus pre-occupied, have actually no place left for such ideas and reflections as tend to produce a thorough conviction of the necessity for making some preparation to quit our present state of existence, with a reasonable hope of infinitely greater happiness in the next we are destined to enter. That the one we are now in cannot possibly last beyond a period most fearfully brief, infidels as well as christians are compelled to observe; for none live to be capable of observation whose experience has not perfectly assured them, that all are doomed to die; none live to years of reflection, who can well avoid sometimes looking forward, however sceptically, to that awful doom, without many terrors and alarms as to what may follow so fearful a change. For *this change*, so absolutely sure, so truly appalling to man, christian education alone can effectually prepare us—and ought therefore most assuredly to be made the basis, the substantial part, the great end of all education whatever.

That we can never hope to see so desirable and highly important a reform accomplished without some other means, some other agencies than such as we have heretofore had, seems to me demonstrably true. It appears equally clear that they must be voluntary associations, in some form or other, for the promotion and improvement of education, consisting of true, sincere, persevering, efficient friends to the cause—no “sleeping partners,” (as mercantile men say,) but all, both active and zealous to the utmost of their power. To expect such

reform from legislation is a vain hope, unless we already had such law-makers in sufficient numbers for the purpose, as *that* reform in our parental instruction, schools and colleges alone could produce. When such consummation can take place, all essential as it seems to our national welfare, and devoutly as every one may wish it, none but he who knoweth all things can possibly tell. But each of us may venture so far as to predict, that voluntary institutions and societies, similar, gentlemen, to that which you have established, hold out far more cheering promises of success than can be hoped for from any other source. They will serve as appropriate nuclei, (if I may thus apply the term) for attracting around them the scattered talent, the learning and active benevolence of society. When thus concentrated, they will perform for our intellectual world what the sun does for that magnificent world of effulgent stars and constellations with which *he* is surrounded—by diffusing in every direction that genial light and heat, so essential to adorn, to sustain, and to invigorate both. What a glorious prospect! what a delightful anticipation! Shall we not then cherish it, my friends, as a *possible* event—nay, as one which nothing is wanting to accomplish, but a general combination of the intelligence, the zeal, and active perseverance of the numerous and sincere, but too desponding, too supine friends to the cause of universal education?

You, gentlemen members of this institution, have commenced the noble work. Let your exertions then to sustain and carry it on never know a moment's intermission, and my life on the issue, but a few years will elapse before the happy effects of such efforts will be felt and seen to the remotest limits of our community. Your patriotic example will soon be followed in other parts of our beloved state; similar associations will be formed elsewhere; a similar spirit of benevolence will be awakened and exerted, until poor old Virginia will once more hold up her long drooping head among such of her sister states as have most advanced in all those useful arts and sciences, best calculated not only to adorn and embellish private life, but to secure both individual and national happiness.

Before I conclude, permit me to address a few remarks to *you*, young gentlemen, the cherished alumni of this college. Although not directly applicable to our main purpose, I hope they may be found to have an important bearing on it,—since I shall adduce a few practical illustrations of the fatal errors you may commit in regard both to professional and domestic duties, unless you adopt forthwith and forever, as constant guides, those good principles of education which voluntary and numerous associations for its improvement, seem alone capable of introducing into all our schools. You will be the first to enjoy the precious fruits of all such as the members of this institute will probably recommend. Suffer me then to add my

humble efforts to theirs for your benefit; and deem me not obtrusive, if they should partake somewhat of the admonitory character: for, be assured that my remarks shall all be such as a friend and father would make to those in whose happiness he felt the deepest solicitude.

If I have succeeded in my most anxious desire to impress upon your minds the thorough conviction that the principles of morality and religion, indissolubly united, *must* form the beginning, the middle and the end of all that deserves the name of education, your first, your constant and supreme effort will be to *acquire them*. Then indeed, you may pursue the usual course of your scholastic studies, not only without danger of mistaking the means for the end, but with incalculable advantages both present and prospective; for all will be made conducive to the great, the eternal purposes for which you were created. Your knowledge of foreign languages and histories will contribute to convince you that there have been and still are nations, kindred and people like yourselves,—with similar wants, passions and capabilities, deserving your sympathy, your regard, your brotherly love,—that national antipathies should have no place in a human bosom—that national wars, except for defence, are national crimes; and that man should consider man his brother, in whatever condition or on whatever spot of the habitable globe he may be found.

Your mathematics will lead you to the conviction, strong and irresistible as the demonstrative principles and reasonings upon which the whole of this noble science depends, that nothing but a God of all perfect wisdom and love could have endowed you with faculties and powers capable of deriving not only the highest mental gratifications from such a source, but of applying the discoveries which produce these gratifications to an infinite series of the most beneficial purposes.

Your chemistry will aid in teaching you that none but a Being infinitely wise and of boundless power and goodness, could possibly have contrived and arranged such a vast multitude of substances, in all their endless variety of combinations and affinities, such an immense world of multiform matter—all as it would seem conducive in some way or other to human comfort, gratification, or high enjoyment.

Your philosophy and metaphysics, will draw you irresistibly to a great first cause—the supreme, beneficent, ever bounteous Author of all the objects of our senses, of all the powers and conceptions of our understandings; and will indelibly stamp upon your hearts the sentiments of adoration, love and obedience, as the only proper tribute you could pay to a Being, who, so far as we can comprehend his works, hath made them all subservient, either directly or indirectly, to our own happiness, both in time and eternity. These sciences will bring home

to your bosoms and business the vital truth that you have minds of vast powers of comprehension—faculties capable of undefinable expansion; and souls of such godlike energies, aspirations and capacities of enjoyment, as nothing less than a God of all power, wisdom and love, could either have created or bestowed. In a word, whatever path you may pursue within the whole circle of scientific and literary research, it will lead you, if under the constant guidance of moral and religious principles, to the possession of the chief good here on earth, and to “that house above, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

There are indeed no circumstances nor situations in which you can anticipate even the possibility of being placed, unless bereft of all consciousness or sanity of mind, that can exempt you from the obligation of making these principles the chart and compass as it were, by which you are to steer your earthly course. Let us imagine a few of such as most commonly occur in our progress through life—such as are matters of choice rather than necessity—and we shall then more clearly see the indispensable use of such a chart and compass to direct us safely and happily in our unavoidable passage to realms of eternal duration.

Almost every man, for example, at some period of his existence, desires to become a husband—to unite himself for life to some individual of the other sex, as a means of enjoying far greater happiness than he possibly could in any single state. It is a situation in which millions voluntarily place themselves—a situation of vast and complicated responsibilities—involving numerous relationships and duties of the highest imaginable importance, upon which depend not only the domestic and social happiness of individuals, but the moral condition of whole communities and nations. Yet, how few of these millions, even among the most deeply versed in scholastic lore, unless they are men of the soundest moral and religious principles, are ever guided in their choice by any thing but fancy, whim, caprice, or some other far less excusable motive? Their scholastic acquirements alone, never avail them in the slightest degree. The eye is usually the sole guide—the appellate court of reason and judgment not being so much as even consulted. When married, they generally become parents, and thereby incur duties the most sacred and of the most awful responsibilities; for they are *then* answerable for the souls of *others* as well as for *their own*—for souls, with whose happiness they are intrusted even by the God of the universe himself! Yet how, let me ask, are these momentous duties generally fulfilled, even by the best scholars, unless they are also moral and religious men? Instead of fulfilment, we too often behold total neglect, nay frequently the grossest, most shameful, most criminal violation; and all this too by individuals who have obtained the highest

collegiate honors. What is the fair inference from such facts? Why, that no education which has not the united principles that I am endeavoring to recommend for its basis, its means of completion, and its great end, can fit man even for the two most common and by far the most important conditions of life.

Let me call your attention now to a few of the chief professions in which the young men of our country are most apt to engage; and let us endeavor to ascertain how far mere scholastic acquirements, even of the highest grade, will enable you to pursue these professions with profit and honor to yourselves, and with benefit to the community of which you are members.

If you become physicians, without something more than the mere nominal worldly belief in the general utility of moral and religious principles, you will have nothing but the very feeble, seldom regarded check of worldly prudence, to restrain you from hurrying into the practice of the profession, before the proper preparation can possibly be made. Your own pecuniary emolument will become your chief object,—this you will be apt to pursue with no farther regard than your popularity requires, to the numerous risks you will incur of destroying both the health and life of others. You will hasten on in this course with a brevity of preparation far shorter than is deemed necessary to make even a good cook or washer-woman—although the thing to be practised upon, in the first case, is *human life itself*; while, in the latter cases, they are only the human appetite for food and some of the habiliments of the human body! Yet, it is upon the skill and humanity of the members of the medical profession, that society must depend for the alleviation or cure of all those indescribable miseries, under which, in the countless forms of sickness and disease, mankind are doomed to suffer to the end of the world—doomed alas! in a great measure, by their own vices and profligacy, superinduced by false education much more than by any naturally inherent defect either in their bodily or mental constitutions.

Should the profession of law be your choice, here also you will find that mere scholarship, mere literary and scientific acquirement, unsustained by deeply fixed, continually active, moral and religious principles, will avail you quite as little as in the practice of medicine. Instead of becoming "compounders of strife," as these principles enjoin us all to be, you will be much more apt to turn out encouragers of litigation. You will often without scruple aid the rapacious and vindictive in the gratification of their criminal passions, by defending them from the legal consequences of their indulgence. You will frequently vindicate the oppressor in his wrongs, assist guilt in seeking safety, and enable crime to escape its just and lawful punishment. Calumniators, thieves, robbers, and de-

stroyers of life as well as of innocence, will be indebted to you for renewed opportunities of preying upon the peace, the property, the happiness of society. You will thus, as far as depends upon your professional labors, actually cherish crime, pervert justice, and defeat the ends of all those conservative laws which it should be *your* peculiar province to expound, *your* inviolable duty to sustain in all their purity and force, by never for a moment countenancing or aiding their violators. Then the appropriate punishment for every outrage against penal law would always follow every perpetration of unlawful deeds; for each fee offered by such enemies of mankind as commit atrocious crimes, would be considered and rejected either as the price of property wickedly gained—of innocence utterly ruined—of character irretrievably blasted, or of life criminally taken away. I do not speak of those doubtful cases wherein lawyers may be deceived by the *ex parte* statements of their clients; but of such as carry deep and damning guilt in their very face—of those in which the applicants for counsel prove themselves, *by their own shewing*, to be steeped as it were in infamy, iniquity and deadly crime—of those who practice injustice as a lucrative trade, ruin character by way of recreation, and destroy innocence as a pleasurable pursuit—of those who, as long as their money lasts, rely upon lawyers to defend them in making the property, the character, the happiness of others subservient to their own diabolical appetites and passions. Would all lawyers make it a point of conscience never to appear for such wretches, unless the courts assigned them as counsel, the criminals themselves would never be unjustly condemned; neither would they ever escape punishment, as they now often do, by the ingenious but highly pernicious sophistry of their hired defenders. Laws would then attain the great ends for which they were enacted, and our whole community would enjoy a far greater degree of safety from the perpetrators of crime than it has ever done heretofore.

Should political life be your choice, after finishing a scholastic course wherein both morals and religion have been so little regarded as not to be made paramount objects of pursuit, instead of becoming pure patriots, solely devoted to your country's good, you will be much more apt to turn constant calculators of the chances for personal aggrandizement—careful measurers and weighers of your own private interests against your public duties, and deep casuists in the means of evading or violating the last to promote the first, wherever your real purpose and only anxious desire may admit of probable concealment. You will become, with few exceptions, if possessed of sufficient talents and cunning, members of that most pernicious class of politicians called demagogues, who in fact have always proved the curse of every

country wherein they have acquired political power. These have patriotism, patriotism, continually on their lips, but never in their hearts and actions—deeming it much easier to feign love of country than really to possess and exert it—much more thrifty to wheedle and cajole the people for their own base selfish purposes,—than manfully and like true friends combat their prejudices and inform their understandings. You will reach the lowest, most despicable grade of political prostitution, by turning *man-worshippers*; and soon learn to offer up your incense in exact proportion to the vanity of your idols and their power to gratify your wants; until at last you will neither see, hear, nor understand any thing but as they wish you; and will call black white, or white black—just as they bid you do. To this wretched state of degradation and self-abasement do most politicians sink themselves, whose educations have not been firmly based on sound, moral and religious principles.

Let us suppose, lastly, that you should prefer the mercantile profession to any other, after acquiring all the learning to be gained in the customary course of education. What will probably be your practice as merchants, if the principles which I am recommending as the essentials of all education, have not been made so of yours? Will this practice be guided by the social or the selfish principle? Will it be, "*live and let live*," or "*live for self alone*?" But very little observation and experience will compel you to admit that the latter maxim will in most cases be the ruling one. Nay, it will not only rule you, but blind you also to the great truth which should always govern the whole mercantile class, that all fair commerce is nothing more than an interchange of equivalents—a supplying of each other's wants—by which both sellers and buyers are mutually benefitted—a bond of peace and union, instead of a war of cunning for the accumulation of pelf. In fact every thing called commerce or barter, wherein this effect of mutual benefit does not take place, so far as depends upon the intention of the parties, is neither more nor less than *fraud in disguise*—fraud concealed under the specious title of skill in trade—in

other words, it is an unjust attempt on both sides to get some undue advantage in the traffic. Such attempts you never would make—indeed you could not possibly make them, were your hearts constantly and deeply influenced, during the whole of your scholastic course, by the pure, the genuine principles of morality and religion, while your conduct was regulated by them as the guardians of your honor, the preservers of your reputation, the unerring guides that point the way from time to eternity.

These principles and these alone form our only safeguards against vice and crime—our only security for using whatever other education we may acquire, as rational and accountable beings should use all the powers of their minds and bodies. Once acquired and ardently cherished, they will prove to you "a refuge in every storm—a present help in every trouble"—the sweetest solace in all adversity—the ever faithful monitors and guides in prosperous fortune. Armed with such a panoply you may safely march through all the most perilous paths of life, without fear of serious injury; and proceed, rejoicing on your way, that you have neither lived nor labored in vain. *Yours* will be the only true glory of the present life,—that of contributing to human happiness—*yours* the sole victory worthy of beings endowed with such god-like faculties,—the victory over your own passions—and *yours* the indescribable rewards after death, of those "who have done the will of their Father on earth as it is in heaven."

Look always to these principles as to the polar star of your earthly course—act up to them faithfully, under all the trying circumstances in which you may be placed; and each of you may then, in the confident hope of being graciously heard, begin and close every day of your lives with the comprehensive prayer of the pious Thomson:—

"Father of light and life! thou Good Supreme!

Oh! teach me what is good! teach me thyself!

Save me from folly, vanity and vice,

From ev'ry low pursuit! and feed my soul

With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;

Sacred,—substantial,—never-fading bliss!"

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